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OFFICE OF FARMLAND PRESERVATION NEWSLETTER

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[HTTP://OFP.SCC.WA.GOV/](http://ofp.scc.wa.gov/)

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EPA Extends Public Comment Period: Fed Water Quality

EPA is extending the public comment period by 45 days for the proposed rule "Revision of Certain Federal Water Quality Criteria Applicable to Washington" (80 FR 55063, September 14, 2015) in response to requests from stakeholders. Additionally, EPA is announcing that it will offer virtual public hearings on the proposed rule via the Internet in December 2015.

Comments must now be received on or before December 28, 2015. The comment period was originally scheduled to end on November 13, 2015.

EPA has proposed to revise the current federal Clean Water Act human health criteria applicable to waters under the state of Washington's jurisdiction to ensure that the criteria are set at levels that will adequately protect Washington residents, including tribes with treaty-protected rights, from exposure to toxic pollutants.

For more information, including details on the upcoming public hearings, visit: <http://www2.epa.gov/wqs-tech/water-quality-standards-regulations-washington>

USDA: Next Generation of Farmers and Ranchers

USDA recently announced a commitment to prioritize \$5.6 billion over the next two years within USDA programs and services that serve new and beginning farmers and ranchers. USDA also announced a new, tailored web tool designed to connect burgeoning farm entrepreneurs with programs and resources available to help them get started.

The new web tool is available at www.usda.gov/newfarmers. The site was designed based on feedback from new and beginning farmers and ranchers around the country, who cited unfamiliarity with programs and resources as a challenge to starting and expanding their operations. The site features advice and guidance on everything a new farm business owner needs to know, from writing a business plan, to obtaining a loan to grow their business, to filing taxes as a new small business owner. By answering a series of questions about their operation, farmers can use the site's Discovery Tool to build a personalized set of recommendations of USDA programs and services that may meet their needs.

A full explanation of the investment targets, benchmarks and outcomes is available at: [BFR-Commitment-Factsheet](#).



Food Safety News: GAP for small & mid-sized farms

By Cookson Beecher | Food Safety News | Learning to 'Bridge the GAPS' for Small and Mid-Sized Farms

Waging a successful battle against the foodborne pathogens that can sicken people — or even kill them — takes some creative strategizing on the part of small- and mid-size farms, primarily because they're so different from large farms and even from one another.

With that in mind, about 25 people took advantage of the invitation to come to Viva Farms, an incubator for new farmers near Burlington, WA, on Oct. 24, 2015, for a free morning workshop on food safety, followed by an afternoon computer session at Skagit Valley College. (Ongoing verbal Spanish translation was provided during both sessions by Kate Selting-Smith, Washington State University Extension Small Farms Program.)

Turns out that a computer and a flash drive, complete with practice sheets, templates, and checklists, can be just as useful as a hoe and a tractor when it comes to successful farming in today's world.

Follow this link to read the full article: <http://goo.gl/SFFzmP>

Stay in contact and sign up for the OFP-Newsletter!

Email frequency is once a month

Sign up on the web at: <http://ofp.scc.wa.gov>

Cascadia Grains Conference - Olympia, January 9

THE CASCADIA GRAINS CONFERENCE brings together farmers, processors and end-users, as well as investors, brokers and local government officials to support rebuilding a grain economy west of the Cascade Mountains in Washington, Oregon, and British Columbia through three value-added enterprises – brewing and distilling, baking and other food uses, as well as animal feed.

The 4th Cascadia Grains Conference will be held at the South Puget Sound Community College in Olympia, WA on **Saturday, January 9th, 2016**.

Registration and schedule available by going to: <http://cascadiagrains.com/>



Western Washington wheat - Image: WSU

Thurston County Planning Commission - Ag/Urban Growth

The Thurston County Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on Wednesday, **November 18, 2015 at 7:00 p.m.** to discuss two items on the 2016-2017 Preliminary Development Code Docket. One of these items relates to agriculture in the Urban Growth Area.

Comment Topic 1: Proposed Changes to Urban Growth Areas

Thurston County is in the process of updating the development codes for agriculture in the Urban Growth Areas (UGAs). The purpose of this update is to amend the three UGA zoning codes (Lacey, Olympia, and Tumwater) to be more consistent with the current city regulations for urban agriculture. This proposal is on the Development Code Docket as item 'A-7: UGA Agriculture Code and Appendix' available here [[Attachment: A-7 Amend UGA Zoning Codes for Urban Agriculture](#)]

More information at the [Planning Commission's agendas page](#).



WA Small Fruit Conference - December 2, 3 & 4, 2015

Locations: Lynden, WA (LIVE in person) Prosser, WA (via live video conference broadcast)

Washington Small Fruit Conference is a 3-day conference with latest relevant research information delivered by the scientists performing the research. Lunches each day are provided. This conference is presented in association with the Lynden Ag Show, a trade show featuring vendors serving the small fruit community.

Lynden, WA - This live in person location is at NW Washington Fairgrounds on all three days. Note: Friday, December 4th is a 1/2 day of special workshop sessions. Limited available spots for Friday special workshop sessions.

See live location Program Outline - <https://www.regonline.com/custImages/320000/327683/wsfc2015OneSheet.pdf>

Prosser, WA - This remote viewing location is at Best Western Inn at Horse Heaven on December 3rd only. The following presentations will be broadcast to Prosser for our Eastern WA growers:

- Development of Cold Hardiness Models for Blueberries
- Improved Pollinator Management for Small Fruit Production
- Roll and Importance of Boron in Blueberry Production
- Root Development in Blueberries and Its Implication for Management
- Future Spray Technology for Small Fruit Production
- Comparing Revenues for Different Albion Planting Dates

Registration information - <http://whatcom.wsu.edu/ag/edu/sfc/>

Please be sure to register to the correct location



Grant Opportunity: Environmental Solutions for Communities Grant Program

Environmental Solutions for Communities Grant Program - Details here: <http://goo.gl/IsIFdL>

Wells Fargo and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation seek to promote sustainable communities by supporting highly visible projects that link economic development and community well-being to the stewardship and health of the environment. More than \$2 million is available nationwide, with strong preference given to geographic focus areas. One of the program's priorities is supporting sustainable agricultural practices and private lands stewardship.

Proposals are due by December 10, 2015.

Grant Opportunity: Community Food Projects

Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program - [Program link](#)

USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) recently announced they are accepting applications for funding through the Community Food Projects Competitive Grant Program. Applications are for three kinds of grants: 1- Community Food Projects; 2 -Planning Projects; and 3 - Training and Technical Assistance Projects.

The maximum Community Food Project award in a single year is \$125,000 and the maximum award over four years is \$400,000. The maximum Planning Project award is \$35,000 for the total project period of a maximum of three years.

Application and grant details available by going to: <http://goo.gl/nJCjCjD> -

Applications are due November 30, 2015.

Grant Opportunity: Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive Program

USDA recently announced the availability of up to \$16.8 million in funding to help participants in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) increase their purchases of fruits and vegetables.

The funding is available to local, state and national organizations to test incentive strategies to help SNAP participants better afford healthy foods. This is the second round of awards to be made under the Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive program created by the 2014 Farm Bill. USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) will administer the grants.

Funded projects will test community based strategies that contribute to our understanding of how best to increase the purchase of fruits and vegetables by SNAP participants through incentives at the point of purchase, supported by efficient benefit redemption technologies, that inform future efforts.

Application and grant details available by going to: <http://goo.gl/UQG4YE>.

Applications are due December 16, 2015.

Grant Awards: USDA Announces \$34.3m in awards

USDA recently announced \$34.3 million in new funding to support local and regional food systems. Washington received nearly \$800,000 in the various categories. Click links to see all awardees and projects.

USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) awarded [\\$13.3 million in Farmers Market Promotion Program grants](#) to 164 projects. AMS is also awarding [\\$11.9 million in Local Food Promotion Program grants](#) for intermediary local-food enterprises such as food hubs. AMS is awarding [\\$1 million in matching-grant funds through the Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program](#), to find solutions to challenges and opportunities in marketing, transporting, and distributing U.S. agricultural products. Meanwhile, USDA's Food and Nutrition Service is awarding [\\$8.1 million for projects to enhance the effectiveness of SNAP operations at farmers markets](#).

Tumwater, WA food business wins Social Venture Partner award

Social Venture Partners (SVP) Fast Pitch is a business pitch competition for innovative nonprofit and for-profit social impact entrepreneurs – organizations that are solving today's important social problems and making a positive impact in the Greater Puget Sound area. In its first four years, SVP Fast Pitch has connected social impact entrepreneurs with over \$1.2 million in investments and grants. Learn more about SVP by going to: <http://www.socialventurepartners.org/seattle/>



In the SVP Fast Pitch Investment Fund category, [Deep Root Foods](#) placed first and was awarded \$130,000, the top prize for a for-profit. See the whole list of winners by going to: [SVP 2015 Fast Pitch Winners](#)

Deep Roots Foods, LLC is a start-up certified Minority Woman Business Enterprise (MWBE) owned, Tumwater, Washington based local foods innovation leader. Deep Roots Foods is a GMO free small batch food processing, co-packing, and food warehouse fulfillment company. Deep Roots Foods is the only MWBE co-packer on the West coast.

Despite Profit Potential, Organic Field Crop Acreage Remains Low

U.S. crop acres under USDA certified organic systems have grown rapidly since the National Organic Program (NOP) was implemented in 2002. Organic crop acreage increased from about 1.3 million to almost 3.1 million acres between 2002 and 2011. While acreage for some major field crops increased substantially, growth was modest for others. Among three major field crops—corn, soybeans, and wheat—certified organic production of corn increased the most. Certified organic wheat acres were the highest, but declined after 2009. Recent USDA survey data show corn acreage up 24 percent, soybean acreage up 3 percent, but wheat acreage down 3 percent between 2011 and 2014.



Despite the strong interest in organic food in the United States, overall adoption of organic corn, soybeans, and wheat remains low, standing at less than 1 percent of the total acreage of each crop. One reason for the low levels of organic adoption among U.S. field crop producers may be a lack of information about the relative costs and returns of organic and conventional production systems on commercial farms, and the performance of farms choosing the organic approach.

Read the full research at USDAs Amber Waves: <http://goo.gl/f3ZoWI>

U.S. House Agriculture Committee Updates

House Agriculture Committee Examines the Relationship Between Agriculture and National Security

The House Agriculture Committee recently held its first in a new series of hearings to examine the relationship between agriculture and national security. In the opening hearing, members and witnesses examined the threats and vulnerabilities to agricultural security as well as the economic significance associated with such threats.

Written testimony provided by the witnesses from today's hearing is linked below. Click [here](#) for more information, including Chairman Conaway's [opening statement](#), and the archived [webcast](#).

Nutrition subcommittee examines how to break the cycle of poverty in young adults

In other committee news, the subcommittee on Nutrition, held a [hearing](#) to examine how growing up in poverty impacts children's ability to move up the economic ladder and break the cycle of poverty. This hearing was part of the committee's ongoing review of the Past, Present, and Future of SNAP, currently known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Members heard from a panel of witnesses who shared the impact poverty has on children, the challenges they face as they transition into adulthood, and ways to increase their likelihood of success as an adult.

Written testimony provided by the witnesses from today's hearing is linked below. Click [here](#) for more information, including Subcommittee Chairwoman Walorski's [opening statement](#), and the archived [webcast](#).

In Short

NASS Agricultural Statistical Bulletin now available

The 2015 Washington Annual Statistical Bulletin is available online and can be accessed at <http://goo.gl/YDy2qD>

The statistical bulletin is a yearly publication which provides summaries of all major crop and livestock commodities in the state of Washington including field crops, vegetables, fruits, nuts, berries, wheat, cattle, etc. This publication also provides farm numbers, land values, prices received by farmers and more.

Zoning for Local Foods Featured in New Guide

A new [114-page guidebook available online](#), Municipal Zoning for Local Foods in Iowa, provides practical guidance and sample zoning code language related to local food production and sales. Code language from 84 municipalities across the nation is provided on a variety of topics, including aquaculture, bees, chickens, goats, front-yard gardens, community and market gardens, and urban agriculture districts.

Available here: <http://goo.gl/1ZkqFk>

2015 Farm to School census results released

USDA recently announced early results from USDA's second Farm to School Census indicating that school districts across the country invested more than half a billion dollars in local foods in the 2013-2014 school year. That represents an increase of \$212 million (or 55 percent) over final results from the last census, conducted two years ago.

Find your district and review the results by going to: <http://goo.gl/T3DRtt>

New 'Alien' wasp discovered in Washington state

By Linda Weiford, WSU News

PULLMAN, Wash. – The discovery in Washington state of a parasitic wasp that kills its host like a scene from the “Alien” sci-fi movie has entomologists cheering from the west coast to the east.

That's because the wasp's victim – the brown marmorated stink bug – is far more wicked. What's more, the wasp, which hails from Asia and is being studied under quarantine in the U.S., has been found living at a public park in Washington.

Two small clusters of *Trissolcus japonicus* were discovered in Vancouver, Wash., by a field technician with Washington State University's Tree Fruit Research and Extension Center, according to entomologist Elizabeth Beers who supervises the worker.

“We did not expect to find this wasp here and are very excited about the discovery. In the insect world, we struck it rich,” she said.

Read the full article by going to: <https://goo.gl/unYRok>



The efficient killer is only the size of a typed comma. (Photos courtesy of the USDA)

American Farmland Trust releases PACE program survey

American Farmland Trust recently released their annual survey of state purchase of agricultural conservation easement (PACE) programs. Here is a [link](#) to the final table summarizing state level PACE activity as of January 2014. You are welcome to copy and distribute it through your social media networks or imbed it on your website.

The [table](#) tracks the progress of farm and ranch land protection programs in the 29 states that have acquired funding and/or easements. As of January 2015, state PACE programs have invested nearly \$3.9 billion to acquire 14,541 easements and permanently protect more than 2.57 million acres across the nation.

To date, Washington state has permanently protected 6,836 acres.



Nation's Ag Co-ops Set Records for Income and Revenue

USDA recently announced that the nation's farmer, rancher and fishery cooperatives posted record income and revenue in 2014.

As part of USDA's observance of October as National Cooperative Month, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack previewed a USDA report to be released later this month that shows cooperatives earned \$6.5 billion in net income and generated \$246.7 billion in total revenue last year.

Net income increased 16.5 percent while revenue rose 0.4 percent from 2013. Co-ops set records for income and revenue in 2014 for the fourth year in a row.



Washington had two cooperative in the top 100: the Northwest Dairy Association headquartered in Seattle moved up two spots from 2013 to number 8 in the nation. Tree Top Inc located in Selah moved up 11 spots to number 89 in the nation.

Read the full press release by going to: <http://goo.gl/PgJfSa>



King Conservation District Regional Food System Program

The King Conservation District is establishing a new Regional Food System Program based on King County Kitchen Cabinet and the Puget Sound Regional Council action plans, and on personal engagement with a wide range of local food system advisors. Drawing on this community input, KCD will implement a series of initiatives that will contribute to the economic viability of local farmers, encourage more new farmers, expand acreage in food production, improve food access, and increase demand for local farm products.



The 2015 Program of Work will include a series of Early Action Projects and the launch of a new KCD Food System Grant Program. Click through to see the early action projects and the grant program. <http://goo.gl/78MKzI>

For information about the KCD Regional Food System Grant Program email: foodfarmgrant@kingcd.org

Washington Small Fruit Conference: December 2-4

The Washington Small Fruit Conference is a 3-day conference with latest relevant research information delivered by the scientists performing the research. Lunches each day are provided. This conference is presented in association with the Lynden Ag Show, a trade show featuring vendors serving the small fruit community. Conference info: <http://goo.gl/g7E4Ji>

Agenda: <http://goo.gl/KC3Hdn> | Registration: <https://goo.gl/6zaMEV>



WA receives \$4.1 million in federal specialty crop grant funds

The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) and U.S. Department of Agriculture recently announced this year's recipients of Specialty Crop Block Grant Program funds, including \$4.1 million for Washington state.

The 2015 USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant will fund 24 projects managed by WSDA in partnership with other organizations. Washington ranks second in the nation behind California in production of specialty crops, defined as fruits, vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture, and nursery crops, including floriculture.

Awards for individual projects range from \$43,000 to \$250,000 and will go to agricultural commodity commissions, agricultural associations, non-profit organizations and Washington State University. WSU is the grant recipient for 10 of the projects.

Visit www.agr.wa.gov/Grants/SCBGP to see the list of [projects](#).



Cultivating Collective Action: The Ecology of a Statewide Food Network

A [new report out of the University of Minnesota](#) examines key activities of statewide food networks, including challenges these networks face and best practices to cultivate collective action.

The full report is available here: <http://goo.gl/1leflb> (PDF)

Food networks and food policy councils have emerged rapidly across the United States and Canada in the last decade. Currently, there are more than 250 in North America, according to the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future's directory. These community-based, cross-sector groups of individuals and organizations work comprehensively to solve complex challenges of the food system, such as prevention of chronic diseases caused, in part, by poor diet quality. In many states, statewide food networks have formed in order to generate more support, mutual learning, collaboration, and collective action across local and regional networks, and/or to influence policy at the state level.

Look for information about Washington's Food System Roundtable! (featured example on PDF page 16)

Explore Lease Opportunities on Washington's State Trust Lands

Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has more than 1 million acres of productive, sustainably managed state-owned lands available to lease for dryland and irrigated crops, orchards, vineyards or grazing. Lease revenues help support public school construction statewide.



Now, there's an easy way to:

- Receive emails about upcoming lease opportunities
- Find links to lease documents and maps for upcoming lease auctions
- Find locations of state lands, available leases, and information about individual parcels and their current leases using the Lease Opportunity Viewer, a free, online interactive mapping tool

INTERESTED? Click [here](#) to get notifications of upcoming lease opportunities and auctions. You can always view DNR agriculture lease information through our [Lease Opportunity Viewer](#)

New UW Business Education Program

New UW Business Education Program - Food Manufacturer Business Accelerator

Apply now for the 2016 Business Growth Collaborative. Management Training Designed to Support the Needs of Small- and Medium Sized Food Manufacturing Companies

- Development of strategic growth plans assisted by business school faculty, industry experts and fellow company owners
- Access to consulting teams of business students to work on strategic projects for companies
- Creation of a CEO-to-CEO community to provide owners a "mini-board of directors" to help make critical decisions

Ideal for minority or women-owned enterprises in the value chain of the food manufacturing industry. Enrollment in this program is very limited so please send your application today. Learn More: <http://bit.ly/businessgrowthcollaborative>. This program is brought to you by the Consulting and Business Development Center at the UW Foster School of Business.

For more information please contact Ivan Barron at ibarron@uw.edu

WASHINGTON STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Mark Your Calendars

Professional Agricultural Workers Conference - December 6-8, 2015 Tuskegee, Alabama

This 73rd annual conference is presented by Tuskegee University. "Beyond the Veil—Agriculture, Families and Communities of the Future: Local, National, and Global Perspectives" will address small farm issues, veterans in agriculture, bioenergy, climate change, and innovative programs.

Learn more: <http://www.pawc.info/>

CLE: Easements in Washington - November 20 - Seattle

Easements and easement terms continue to become increasingly complex as they mirror legal and technical changes in our society. What was a simple temporary construction easement 30 years ago now has ramifications ranging from future development rights to tort claims.

[View Agenda, Faculty, and Pricing](#) or [Register Now](#)

2015 Tilth Producers of Washington Annual Conference Spokane Convention Center November 13-15, 2015

The Tilth Producers 2015 annual conference returns to Eastern Washington, bringing three full days of quality education and networking opportunities.

Registration details at:

<http://tilthproducers.org/programs/conference-2/registration/>

Master Beekeeper Apprentice course starts Mon. Nov. 16

The next session starts Monday evenings, Nov 16 through Dec 14, 2015 from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. in McCollum Park at WSU Snohomish County Extension's Cougar Auditorium, 600 128th ST SE, Everett. **The five-week course repeats starting again on February 22, 2016.**

Register online at MasterBeekeeper.brownpapertickets.com.

Focus on Farming 12 - November 19, 2015 - 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. (registration begins at 7 a.m.) Evergreen State Fairgrounds, Monroe,

Learn about innovative ideas from local and national farmers. See how new and upcoming farmers are shaping the future of the agricultural and forest industry and providing tomorrow's food and timber.

Register today at: www.focusonfarming.org

Business of Making Hard Cider November 6, 2015 - Burlington WA

The Northwest Agriculture Business Center, WSU - Northwest Washington Research & Extension Center, and the Northwest Cider Association will present a one-day cider making business development workshop for new or existing operations.

Details here:

<http://goo.gl/BHn9HP>

Free Webinar: Nov 19 National Food Hub Survey 2015

What is the state of the food hub across the country? Are hubs profitable? Is the local food market growing as much as people say? What are the economic, social and environmental impacts of hubs? What are food hubs concerned about, and what are their perceived barriers to growth? Join the National Good Food Network to learn the latest!

Register by going to: <https://goo.gl/JljitN>

Washington Small Fruit Conference December 2, 3 & 4, 2015

Locations: Lynden (LIVE in person) Prosser (via live video conference broadcast). **Registration [here](#).**

Come learn of the latest relevant research information delivered by the scientists performing the research. Lunches each day are provided. This conference is presented in association with the Lynden Ag Show, a trade show featuring vendors serving the small fruit community.

South Sound Farm to Fork December 7, Tumwater WA

Attention farmers, come meet, connect, and network with local food partners: regional meat, dairy and produce farmers, chefs, grocers, processors, hospitals and more!

Location: South Sound Manor - 455 North Street SE, Tumwater WA

RSVP and learn more at:

<http://goo.gl/eA2smP>

"OUR MISSION IS TO PROMOTE THE VITALITY OF FARMING, FARMERS, AND RANCHERS BY ENSURING THAT WE WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE PRODUCTIVE AGRICULTURAL LANDS IN WASHINGTON STATE. WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS THROUGH POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNOR, THE LEGISLATURE, THE OFFICE OF FARMLAND PRESERVATION AND OTHERS AND BY ENLISTING PUBLIC SUPPORT. PROGRAMS WILL BE VOLUNTARY, RECOGNIZE LOCAL PRIORITIES, AND PROVIDE FOR ECONOMIC INCENTIVES."